

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 5 as follows:

The invention relates to an operating mechanism or actuating device for a parking brake in motor vehicles.

On page 1, before the paragraph beginning on line 15, please insert the heading  
-- BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION --.

On page 4, before the paragraph beginning on line 17, please insert the heading  
-- SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION --.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 17 as follows:

It is the object of the invention to provide an actuating device that, with simple means, enables a good reduction of noise when applying the parking brake. The actuating device has a toothed segment that is arranged on a bridge-type support of the vehicle body, a brake-actuating lever that is articulated on the bridge-type support, a coupling unit that tensions a brake cable in accordance with the displacement of the brake-actuating lever, a fixing catch that is articulated on the brake-actuating lever and interacts with the toothed segment, a catch spring for pretensioning the fixing catch in the direction of the toothed segment, and a linkage that can be actuated along the brake-actuating lever.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 21:

This object is achieved according to the invention for the actuating device in that the catch spring is designed as a compression spring and engages on one end, which faces away from the toothed segment, of the fixing catch designed as a single-piece double lever, and that the linkage displaces the locking catch out of engagement with the toothed segment counter to the presentation of the catch spring only in the actuating state.

On page 9, before the paragraph beginning at line 1, please insert the heading -- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS --.